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AUTHOR Cornell, William A.
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ABSTRACT

Teacher organizations believe that the teaching profession must govern itself. They are therefore requesting professional commissions in every state to set standards for teacher education. They desire involvement in the planning and implementation of teacher education programs. Teacher organizations feel strongly about competency based teacher education, and although they have always stood for having only competent teachers in the classroom, they will fight governmental intrusions into all professional prerogatives. The organized teaching professions will provide inservice programs for its members. Higher education members of the profession will be invited to be a part of these programs as equal members, but the organized profession will seek expertise at whatever level it is available. The teacher organizations are planning to take new initiatives to enforce their own code of ethics, but will resist outside interference by those who would wish to use the code for their own benefit. Finally, teacher organizations plan to have a greater say in student teaching/intern programs. They desire more input in the field experiences of future teachers. Teachers are now demanding their professional rights, and the new initiatives of organized teachers will overlap on what has formerly belonged solely to institutions of higher education. (RC)

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NEW TEACHER ORGANIZATION INITIATIVES AND TEACHER EDUCATION

BY

WILLIAM A. CORNELL

ASSISTANT EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

FOR

PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT

PENNSYLVANIA STATE EDUCATION ASSOCIATION

AACTE Leadership Institute

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NEW TEACHER ORGANIZATION INITIATIVES AND TEACHER EDUCATION

The organized teaching profession and its members are a product of the teacher education institutions. The AACTE, its member institutions, and the higher education personnel of those institutions are to be commended for their past efforts in teaching professionalization as they are now paying off. Teacher organizations are taking more and more initiatives to act as our organized profession.

An organized profession sets its own standards, provides its own in-service education, and controls its own practice. It is significant that all the organized professions are working more closely with their organizations of professional schools to improve the education of persons for their profession.

The AACTE is to be commended for this leadership meeting where you are assessing the next steps, next steps your organization can take to improve teacher education.

Teacher organizations are indeed in the initiative in professional matters. They differ in various states as to sophistication in collective bargaining and are often criticized for not being more professional, but when organized teachers speak out on professional items there are those who wish they would concentrate on salary and working conditions.

The National Education Association at its July 1975 Representative Assembly reminded itself and other interested persons that there will be increased activity in the professional sector. New Business Item 21 said:

> "The Representative Assembly directs that all staff, and elective and appointive groups within the NEA structure give intensified consideration during the coming year to the professional role of the teacher, and to the precise definition of the professional goals of this Association, and urges the Board of Directors to consider the allocation of special resources either to an established group within the NEA structure or to a new ad hoc group, and that such group be charged with the development of recommendations regarding specific national goals for the full professionalization of teaching, and general guidelines for their implementation, especially in relation to evolving teacher advocacy practices in teacher associations, such that these might be brought before the 1976 Representative Assembly for consideration."

PROFESSIONAL AUTONOMY

The NEA in its Continuing Resolution F-1 states that it believes "The profession must govern itself" and further that "members of the profession through professional standards and practices commissions must set and enforce standards of license, practice ethics and competence."

The establishment of such commissions has introduced the conflict as to who shall set such standards. Our Associations believe that the standards for teacher education should be set by a professional standards and practices commission. In the absence of such a commission the standards and accreditation should be done by NCATE.

In our state and many others, standards are set up by the Department of Education following those set up by the National Association of State Directors of Teacher Education and Certification. (NASDTEC)

AACTE and the NEA must support NCATE, the profession's organization, as opposed to the use of standards for teacher education and accreditation set by bureaucrats who are often more interested in political gain than in professional excellence.

No other profession allows politicians to set their standards.

The organized profession will push for standards commissions in every state. They already exist in California, Oregon, Minnesota, and Pennsylvania. These commissions have a majority membership of classroom teachers.

ACCREDITATION

The Nea in its Continuing Resolution C-3 states very clearly:

> The National Education Association believes in the importance of national accreditation for all teacher education preparation institutions and supports the concept that a single national non-governmental agency perform this function.
>
> The national agency must be broadly representative of the teaching profession and must include equitable representation of K-12 teachers in all matters of policy and function.

In Pennsylvania we speak specifically to the same points when it says in Resolution 75-32:

> The Association shall establish its own Accreditating agency, but supports the National Council for the Accreditation of Teacher Education (NCATE) and holds that only graduates of such approved programs should be employed. Accreditating should only be granted institutions which provide teachers of teachers frequent experience inside public schools.

The Association supports the assignment of classroom teachers and pupil service personnel in basic education as full members of NCATE and Department of Education evaluation teams as representatives in the United Teaching Profession, and believes that for the most effective input, a training program for prospective team members should be provided by the Association.

When one of our largest and again when one of our smaller teacher education istitutions asked our opinion as to the worth of NCATE accreditation, our organization answered with the above resolution.

If NCATE standards were used for accreditation the bureaucracy in our States would be reduced and the number and cost of program approval teams in your institutions would be reduced. National reciprocity could be a fact and not a game played by NASDTEC.

In Pennsylvania, in conjunction with NCATE, we have taught teachers to be on program approval teams, but unless we can remove the Department of Education from the accreditation business, teacher education will be a function of the State rather than the profession.

The organized profession will demand a greater voice in the accreditation process.

TEACHER EDUCATION

The organized profession will continue to demand participation in evaluating and improving teacher education and professional standards. It will do so through standards and practices commissions at the State level and on the NCATE board at the national level.

The NEA resolution 75-22 on teachers education is one of the longest and most detailed statements of policy of the organization. This is true at our State level as well.

One area of teacher education that is not criticized is the subject matter preparation. It is the professionalism that needs improvement.

The organized profession is asking for better screening of teacher candidates, of better student teacher/intern programs, and better instruction in school law, values, ethics, responsibilities, and structure of professional teacher organizations.

The profession is concerned that institutions are more interested in quantity than quality. This is a time when a balance can be built between the decrease demand for more teachers and increased supply of persons applying to enter the profession.

If the teacher education institutions do not create a better balance, the organized profession will react be refusing to allow student teachers in any but a regulated number to enter their schools.

Perhaps there are too many teacher education institutions. Now would be an appropriate time to reduce the number by eliminating marginal and one man teacher education programs.

One of the biggest needs in teacher education is the improved professional education of vocational teachers. Some such teachers have no teacher education at all and yet in Pennsylvania it is expected that 50% of all high school students will soon be in some vocational education.

More of your institutions should demand the right to teach professional courses to vocational education teachers.

More and more teacher organizations will be demanding the right to have advisory committees for teacher education programs. It is a good communication device if done sincerely.

The organized profession looks upon teacher education as an integral part of the profession and will constantly demand more involvement in planning and implementing quality teacher education programs.

CBTE

The organized teaching profession has always stood for having only competent teachers in the classrooms. In its Resolution 75-24 the NEA says it believes the "competent teachers employ the most appropriate processes known for the promotion of learning." However, the NEA "opposes models that prescribe single limited definitions of compentencies that reduce the process of teaching to mechanical non-professional acts or that seek to measure teacher compentency on the basis of student achievement."

The organized profession opposes the imposition of any one process of educating teachers in teacher education institutions.

The infusion of federal money has prodded State Departments of Education to push CBTE. Some institutions have prostituted themselves to receive such money also. The organized professional does not wish to dictate how teachers are to be prepared, but it opposes government bureaucrats from doing the same.

If governmental agencies were removed from the accreditation process, CBTE would not be an issue.

The organized teaching profession will fight governmental intrusion into all professional perrogatives, and will join AACTE in any other organization against political intrusion into the profession.

IN-SERVICE EDUCATION

For several decades the prevailing idea of improving teacher practice was for the teacher to return to a teacher education institution. We saw the growth of requirements for a permanent teaching certificate grow from a few post-graduate credits to a masters degree in some cases.

Your institutions saw this opportunity to expand and graduace teacher education programs grew throughout the nation. But teachers found that graduate teacher education programs did not always relate to their day-to-day problems in the classroom.

There is less talk about requiring teachers to gain masters degrees and more about how teachers can learn through in-service education.

NEA Resolution 75-23 very clearly points out the belief in continuing career development of educators through the support of in-service education and the concept of teacher centers. It goes on to say that it is "the prerogative and responsibility of any professional group to continually improve its knowledge and skills and to govern the process through which the goal is accomplished." (the underlining is mine.)

The NEA Resolution goes on to say "The concept of teachers' centers, to be effective, must assure that the center will be autonomous and governed exclusively by teaching practioners."

The organized teachers do not believe that a university can set up a teacher center, that is a role for teachers themselves. But a university might offer its facilities for such a center.

The NEA New Business Item 64 states:

> NEA shall conduct regional workshops to train members in appropriate techniques to use in selecting educational materials. Decisions in school learning experiences are best made by NEA members knowledgeable in the process in determining quality and effective materials.

One might ask why teachers have to have their professional organizations "train" members how to select educational materials. A professional school should teach professional how to do this.

The organized teaching profession will provide in-service programs for its members. Higher education members of the profession are invited to be a part of these programs as equal members, but the organized profession will seek expertise at whatever level it is available.

The organized profession will start its own teacher centers if necessary.

ETHICS

NEA New Business Item 77 warned affiliates against allowing outside agencies using the Code of Ethics against teachers and to "otherwise avoid application of the Code against their members outside of the disciplinary procedures specifically authorized by NEA or its affiliates."

Teacher education institutions, if they are professional schools, must teach the code of ethics and an understanding of its enforcement.

There appears to be some confusion in some states in regard to practices commissions and ethics commissions. One of the serious problems is to differentiate between those who are unwanted by a school board and those who violate the ethics of the profession.

The organized teaching profession will take new initiatives to enforce its own code of ethics, but will resist outside interference by those who would wish to use the code for their benefit.

STUDENT TEACHING

An area that the organized profession will move into with greater initiative in the future is student teaching/intern programs. The profession is tired of being put upon by teacher education institutions who often literally peddle their student teachers to school districts.

The higher education institutions speak of the partnership or collaboration in this phase of teacher education, but in reality the arrangement is between institutions, not between the professional school and the professional teachers involved.

Again the ugly head of federal funding and CBTE enter the picture. Richey and Clark in writing in ATE new publication, Emerging Concepts for Collaboration wrote, "Collaboration was required since eligible contractors were defined as consisting of one teacher

education institution and one or more cooperating elementary and secondary schools which agreed to jointly and cooperatively develop the teacher compentencies."

The organized profession looks upon such added tasks as student teachers, interns, and other college projects as a violation of their local contracts for salary and working conditions and even more so a violation of good professional practice. We have had strikes over the issue of placement of student teachers.

You can look for the organized teaching profession to demand a greater say in all so-called field experiences of future teachers. Your institutions will have to learn to deal with the organized teachers in addition to the local school enities.

SUMMARY

The organized teaching profession is maturing. Teachers are demanding their professional rights and are taking on their professional responsibilities.

The new initiatives of the organized teachers will intrude into what has formerly been the turf of the institutions of higher education, school administrators, and school boards, but if the teachers your institution prepare are professionally competent and professionally concerned the real receipients of the positive gains from the new professional initiatives will be the students in our schools.